Required Materials:


Course Description:

ENG 131 “Rhetoric and Composition” (3 credits; fully online) meets online for fifteen weeks during the semester as well as during finals week. Students complete weekly topical readings as well as writing and discussion activities related to those readings. Students write a minimum of four essays with a total page count of at least fifteen pages of finished writing. Emphasis is placed on writing processes, including multiple drafts and short assignments that require generating, revising and editing writing. Finals week is typically spent completing final edits of one or more of the essays. These activities average nine hours of work each week.

Although writing is the primary focus of the class, we also review key concepts of grammar, sentence construction, and paragraph construction. Students also define, identify, analyze, and use key rhetorical concepts and skills such as the three rhetorical appeals and the elements of the rhetorical triangle. They are introduced to the basics of MLA documentation and apply that knowledge in preliminary research using primary sources.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed
to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

By enrolling in English 131 you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Communication Skills requirement. You will see this course on your D2L list. At one point during the semester, you will receive an assignment that fulfills both the requirements of this course and the needs of Stephen F. Austin State University's Core Curriculum Assessment Plan with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. When you complete this one assignment, you need to upload the assignment to both your standard course dropbox determined by your Instructor and the “Core Curriculum” dropbox. The Core Curriculum dropbox will be identified by the Objective for which work is being collected. (Examples: Critical Thinking, Teamwork, Social Responsibility Empirical & Quantitative Skills, Personal Responsibility, Communication Skills-Written, Communication Skills-Written & Visual, and Communication Skills- Oral & Visual.) Please note that this only applies to the approved assignment. All other assignments should be submitted according to regular class operations. If you have any questions, please see your Instructor or the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment.

When you complete the assignment mentioned above, you will upload the assignment to both the English 131 dropbox and the Communication Skills dropbox.

Please note that this only applies to the specific assignment listed in the matrix below. All other assignments should be submitted according to regular class operations.

If you have any questions, please see your instructor or contact the Institutional Effectiveness Office at (936) 468-1130.

The chart below indicates the core objectives addressed by this course, the assignment(s) that will be used to assess the objectives in this course and uploaded to the D2L Communication Skills dropbox this semester, and the date the assignment(s) should be uploaded to the D2L Communication Skills dropbox. Not every assignment will be submitted for core assessment every semester. Your instructor will notify you which assignment(s) must be submitted for assessment in the D2L Communication Skills dropbox

*Include only the core objectives taught in this course and indicate which objectives are being formally assessed in this semester.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Title</th>
<th>Date Due in D2L</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis,</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Skills</strong></td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork</strong></td>
<td>To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.</td>
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</table>

**Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 131:**

- Identify and analyze texts with the goal of examining the rhetorical structure, veracity of claims, sufficient use of accurate and credible evidence, as well as possible use in creative, analytical, and persuasive components (Critical Thinking);
- Participate in productive class and group discussion and examination of texts, in order to analyze and synthesize a variety of texts, via a multi-step drafting process (Critical Thinking);
- Understand the role of personal responsibility in the inevitable choices involved in the composition process, in the evaluation of one’s own writing and the writing of
other students, in the ethical use of ideas and information, and in the critical evaluation of all assigned texts (Personal Responsibility);

- Recognize the collaborative and social aspects of the writing process by producing collaborative work and/or feedback for peers and selectively using peer feedback in their own work (Teamwork);
- Demonstrate knowledge of organizational and linguistic structures – including grammar, punctuation, and spelling – through practice in composing and revising (Communication);
- Compose texts in response to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure (Communication).

Prerequisites:

Pass or exemption from THEA or a C in English 099. Students must earn a grade of C or higher in English 131 to be admitted to English 132.

Course Policies:

Navigating the Course:

You are expected to be able to navigate the online course. This means reading the modules, submitting assignments in proper locations, taking part in any assigned discussions, using the email function appropriately, and so on. This course is an online course so all work will be completed and submitted online via D2L (not printed and handed in or emailed). In order to pass the course, you must participate in all online activities. If you do not, you cannot pass this course even if your grade averages out to a passing grade.

Course Requirements:

For this course, you will be required to write a minimum of 4 or more major essays. You must meet the length requirement by writing to the bottom of the page. Missing one of these essays and not turning one in or doing poorly on one essay can have serious consequences for your grade. Essays will be graded both on substance (quality and accuracy of ideas) as well as expression (tone, style, syntax). Exams may include M/C, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay formats. All work in this course must be your original work that was done for this class; otherwise you will earn an F in the course. In order to receive a passing grade for this course, you must complete all assignments.

Attendance:

Regular and punctual attendance is expected for all classes, laboratories, and other activities for which a student is registered, even in an online class. For online classes, attendance is counted by participation in discussion boards, peer review, and turning in
assignments on time as well as participating in other assigned online activities. Before the twelfth class day, all students will have the opportunity to participate in online class activities (introductions, postings to discussion boards, quizzes, etc). Failure to complete at least two of these assignments on time will result in students being reported as “non-attending” with no possibility for reinstatement.

**Late Work Policy:**

I do not accept late work. Assignments are due on the assigned due date. If you are going to turn in a major essay late, then please know that you will lose 10 points for each day that it is late. I will not accept any assignments more than one week late, nor will I accept any assignments after dead week (the final week of classes: the week before final exams).

Please keep up with assignments. An online course is challenging in that it is on you to remind yourself to do the work and turn it in on time.

**Technology:**

You will be using D2L (aka Brightspace) for this course. I attach a video to the course explaining the basics of how to move around in it. The video can be found in several places but is primarily found under the Getting Started module. Explore D2L all you like. You will not break it. However, do not use not understanding how to move around in D2L as an excuse for not doing assignments or discussion boards.

If you have a technology related problem, please let me know so that we can determine a solution or best course of action. Complex technology problems will need to be directed to the Help Desk. We can contact them at 936.468.HELP (4357) or you can go to help.sfasu.edu.

The services that the Help Desk provides for students are:

- Computer support
- Password reset
- Smartphone support
- Online systems support (Office365, email)
- Help website - help.sfasu.edu

**Email & Communication with me:**

**D2L:** I will communicate with the class via D2L. You are responsible for checking D2L daily and for being aware of any information there.

**Email:** I do not answer content-focused emails (such as due dates or assignment clarification, etc) because these questions belong in the public discussion board called Virtual Office. Posting content specific questions in the discussion board Virtual Office
allows everyone in the class to view the question and answer, which is most likely needed with such questions. In addition, questions posted in the Virtual Office allow other students to answer the question sometimes in a more timely manner than myself.

Generally, I respond to most emails (and discussion posts) within 24 to 48 hours during the work week. I’ll check for urgent messages on the weekend. Emails should be used in handling private or confidential one-on-one messages between me and yourself.

I do not accept assignments by email.

**Final Drafts/Rough Drafts:**

You are expected to work on your essays from the moment the essay is assigned. Rough drafts and final drafts are due on the assigned due dates. Submit your final drafts through the assigned modules and/or dropbox, and attach rough drafts to proper discussion boards.

You are expected to participate in Peer Review, providing your peer with constructive feedback. Do not underestimate the value of drafting during your writing process. Peer Review will count as a grade. If I see that you are simply slapping answers down and feedback down in order to get credit without really giving your peer anything helpful, then you may not get credit for peer review.

You need to have the full essay assignment completed and not just one or two paragraphs. Please make sure you peer review at least 1 person in order to receive full credit. **If you see someone has not had their essay reviewed, then please help them out and give them some feedback.** After all, the goal of this is to help those who may struggle with writing. Also, please remember that not everyone in class is good at writing. Please do not shame other students based on their writing ability. Provide constructive feedback that is designed to help your struggling peers get better at writing.

**Revision Policy:**

You have the option of revising ONE of your essays for this course. Here are the guidelines:

1. It may not be your last essay.
2. You must make significant changes to your revised essay taking into account my comments. Revisions of small problems (typos, grammatical mishaps, etc.) will only give you a minimal higher grade (at best). To do this and ONLY this is to waste your time and mine. DO NOT merely go through your essay and change only the grammatical errors that I have pointed out – that is editing, and NOT revision. Please remember the difference between editing and revision.
3. Revisions of major problems (thesis, support, adding in transitions, reorganizing your essay structure, elaboration of analysis, etc.) will garner you a maximum higher grade.
4. If you choose to revise, you must include a reflective essay of at least one page. This should discuss where you were lacking in your paper and what you did to improve. This should be in proper MLA format, include a title, and avoid grammar/mechanics errors.

5. The revised essay will be due the week before Finals week.

6. You must turn in your revised essay and your reflective essay through email. Please give me a heads up that you are revising an essay.

7. These revisions may give you, at most, 10 points back. You are not able to revise plagiarized essays, which will earn you a grade of 0.

**Grading Policy:**
Grades are also posted online periodically. Please let me know immediately if you see any errors in your recorded grades. On the basis of my evaluation, your grade for this course will be determined as follows:

**Assignments**
The assignments and grades for this course will be weighted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary Essay/Midterm</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy Narrative Essay</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Essay</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compare/Contrast Essay</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily work</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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100%

Daily work will be graded (depending on the assignment) either pass/fail or with a **Plus**, **Checkmark**, **Minus**, or **Zero**, or with a letter grade or with a number grade. These will be averaged together and calculated with your essay grades to determine your grade for this course. Daily Work may include quizzes as well as short essays, reflective questions, critical thinking assignments, and grammar/MLA homework, etc.

I reserve the right to allow your participation in the course to affect your final grade. You may not pass this course by only completing the major essay assignments. You will not pass this course by plagiarizing. All work in this course must be original work.

**Discussion Boards**
Discussion boards are the life blood of an online course. You can expect to participate in one or more discussion boards per week. Discussion counts as 10% of your grade. Not participating in it can seriously hurt your grade. In order to receive full credit for participating in the discussion boards, you will need to respond to the question(s) I have
asked. Your response should be a well-developed (4 sentences at minimum), thoughtful exchange with at least 2 peers on the discussion board topic. You cannot respond to (or even see) other's posts without creating your own post first. If I find that you are not taking the discussions seriously and are clearly slapping down answers, then you will also not earn credit.

I do use a rubric for grading discussion posts. Your discussion post and response to your classmates is graded by examining your ability to follow directions and the quality of your post and response. What I look for are evidence that you have followed directions, posted the minimum sentence count, read the reading or readings (or viewed the related videos) and demonstrated critical thinking regarding the discussion prompt. For your response to your classmates, I look for pretty much the same stuff. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind for discussion posts:

1. Read the directions.
2. Say something substantive. Good response posts do not only agree or disagree. When you read another student’s posts, you have the opportunity to expand the conversation.
3. Don’t procrastinate. Participate early and not at the deadline. If everyone participates at the deadline then the quality of the discussion is very surface level. This means that your chances of earning a passing grade are slim.
4. Express yourself as clearly as possible. This means good grammar and avoid slang.

Finally, I do view discussion boards and monitor them daily. I also participate in them. I may not comment on every student’s post but my goal is to post on at least 1/3 of my students posts for an individual discussion.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). The means with which we will discuss topics and get to know one another is through discussion. Thus, I ask that you refrain from using vulgar language, name-calling, or otherwise shaming other students. Please keep in mind that while you do not have to agree with everything a person writes or says you do need to at least respect their right to express their opinion. There are appropriate and inappropriate means of expressing disagreement with another’s ideas. Conduct yourself in a thoughtful and considerate manner and we should be fine.

Again, I reserve the right to let your conduct affect your grade.

Class Participation:

Class participation is one of the means by which you will learn how to improve your thinking, reading, and writing skills. Things that count as participation in class are
following the rules of the syllabus, participating in discussion, peer review, and turning homework in on time. Part of becoming a good writer is learning to appreciate the ideas and criticism of others. In this course, our purpose is to come together as a community of writers. Thus, you are expected to engage in discussion by contributing your own original ideas, and you are expected to respect the ideas/opinions of others. I reserve the right to let participation affect your course grade.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit; and (4) submitting work that you have done for another class instead of turning in original work for this course.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Penalties for Plagiarism**

No plagiarized paper will be accepted for credit in any Writing Program course at Stephen F. Austin University. This includes partially plagiarized papers. A plagiarized paper will automatically **receive an “F” grade**. By reading this syllabus you affirm that you understand plagiarism and that you assume responsibility for any plagiarism that occurs in your essays. Plagiarism will **be grounds for failure in a Writing Program course**. Even if a student’s course grades average out to a passing grade when the “F” from a plagiarized paper is counted in, the instructor may still give the student an “F” for the course. Instructors who suspect that a student has plagiarized will submit a copy of the student’s paper to the Director of the Writing Program, who will keep them on file. Any student who is suspected of plagiarism will have the opportunity to discuss the matter with the Director of the Writing Program. At the end of each academic term, the Director of the Writing Program submits a list of plagiarizers to the English Department Chair who then submits these names to each college dean. Repeat offenders may be
dismissed from the University.

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to HYPERLINK "http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/" http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Course Calendar:** Course calendars are tentative and subject to change. See the Getting Started Module.